



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #IV.E

DATE: SEPTEMBER 9, 2013

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION REGARDING COMMUTER LINE ON FEC RAIL

See attached correspondence for discussion purposes.

From: "Jay, Janelle (DIST7)" <janelle@miamidade.gov>
Date: September 5, 2013 9:22:15 AM EDT
To: "pwallace@hinshawlaw.com" <pwallace@hinshawlaw.com>
Cc: Jim Murley <jmurley@sfrpc.com>
Subject: Tri Rail Coastal Link project

Good Morning Gentlemen:

Commissioner Suarez wished to share with you details from a briefing that he attended regarding the Tri-Rail Coastal Link project.

Commissioner respectfully requests that these comments be placed into the record at the next SFRPC meeting as he plans on attending by telephone.

The intent of the briefing was to address Commissioner Suarez's concerns that he had previously conveyed, mainly concerning the timing of the projects proposed for the Florida East Coast Railway corridor (FEC) as well as the funding and operation of the commuter line.

The entities represented at the briefing included, Florida Department of Transportation District 4, Florida Department of Transportation District 6, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Florida East Coast Industries (FEI).

Commissioner Suarez began the meeting by explaining that a report given at an MPO meeting with various financing options for the commuter line project – formally referred to as the Tri-Rail Coastal Link (TRCL) – initially drew his interest towards this project as he understood the significance of a viable project.

- In terms of the timing of the projects, All Aboard Florida's representative stated that their service is expected to begin operations at the end of 2015.
- FDOT District 4's program manager, who oversees the public commuter line project - Tri-Rail Coastal Link - stated that about 10 months ago a meeting was held, where the parties involved initiated discussions and negotiations about the Access Fee for the publicly financed TRCL. The Access Fee is the cost to use or lease the right-of-way currently owned by FEI needed by the TRCL in order to operate. Commissioner Suarez had previously expressed concerns over a potential rise in Access Fee. He offered to assist in the negotiations.
- FDOT is expected to furnish a proposal with the Access Fee towards the end of September/ beginning of October.
- The estimated capital cost of the full 85 mile Tri-Rail Coastal Link project is estimated to be \$800Million at this point. The figure includes the costs of stations, parking, and right-of-way acquisition needed to bring this project to fruition.
- Local/ regional interests are being represented by the SFRTA as defined in a recent Memorandum of Understanding, the State of Florida's interests are represented by FDOT and private sector interests are represented by FEI in the cost negotiations currently underway.

- The entity expected to operate the TRCL, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA – which currently manages the Tri-Rail) is hopeful that the capital funding formula for this project to be 50% from the federal government, 25% from the State and 25% from local sources.
- At this time, no capital funding or operating funding has been identified. Also worth noting is that the TRCL project remains in the preliminary project development phase.
- The SFRTA anticipates that the fare structure will be similar to that of the Tri-Rail with fare based upon the zone system, including various discount programs for monthly passes. It was also mentioned that a fare increase will be planned for about 25% across the board. Apparently Tri-Rail has one of the lowest fares compared to other systems.
- Issues that remain to be resolved are the exact number of additional tracks necessary as well as identified bridge improvements. The total span of the corridor is expected to be used for the TRCL is 85 miles; about 13 to 20 miles of additional parallel track will be necessary to complete this project as the existing tracks will not have enough capacity in some areas. Cost estimates for the tracks expected to be furnished in December 2013. Bridge improvements will be necessary as the number of trains expected to run over the New River vascular bridge in Broward will increase from those current levels.

Other concerns addressed

- FECI also expressed its intent for the All Aboard Florida project to remain complementary (not competitive) to the TRCL as FECI plans to operate an express service. FECI conveyed interest in completing the TRCL on the heels of the All Aboard Florida project.
- FDOT District 4 expressed challenges in working with the different counties and funding.

Further action expected

- An update on the All Aboard Florida project is expected at the next Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting.
- A suggestion to add the Tri-Rail Coastal link project to the current legislation requesting biannual updates on the All Aboard Florida Project as the two projects are considered complementary.
- In December 2013, an action item will be brought forth to move the TRCL to the next phase, environmental study.

Cordially,

Janelle Jay
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